Amendment to the Claims

Kindly amend claims 1-5, and add new claims 7 and 8 as set forth below. Claim 6 is canceled without prejudice. In accordance with current amendment practice, a complete listing of claims is provided herein. The changes in the amended claims are shown by double brackets or strikethrough (for deleted matter) and underlining (for added matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A wax tree assembly knife[[,]] having two opposite sides, the wax tree assembly [[such]] knife comprising:

an elongated bar of heat conducting material having two opposed and generally parallel heating surfaces, one of the heating surfaces configured ~~surface~~ for contacting [[the]] a pattern gate and another of the heating surfaces configured for contacting [[the]] a wax runner, the heating surface configured for contacting the wax runner having two side edges and a center section between the two side edges, at least a portion of [[a]] the center section being slightly closer to the heating surface configured for contacting the wax runner than the side edges and configured to provide a space for molten wax to be retained; and

means for heating the elongated bar.

2. (Currently Amended) A wax tree assembly knife according to claim 1, wherein the center area is concave.

3. (Currently Amended) A wax tree assembly knife according to claim 1 wherein the center includes a plurality of grooves.

4. (Currently Amended) A wax tree assembly knife for producing molten wax on a pattern gate of at least one wax pattern and a portion of the surface of a wax runner, said wax tree assembly knife comprising:

an elongated bar of heat-conducting material having two opposed and generally parallel heating surfaces, one of the heating surfaces configured ~~surface~~ for contacting

[[the]] a pattern gate, and ~~the other~~ another of the heating surfaces configured ~~surface~~ for contacting ~~the~~ a wax runner, the heating surface configured for contacting the wax runner having at least one raised area with a predetermined configuration and configured to provide a space for molten wax to be retained; and,

means for heating the elongated bar.

5. (Currently Amended) A wax tree assembly knife according to claim 4 wherein the raised area has at least a portion that is grooved.

6. (Canceled)

7. (New) The wax tree assembly knife of claim 4 for producing molten wax on a pattern gate of at least one wax pattern and a portion of the surface of a wax runner, wherein the means for heating the elongated bar further comprises an electrical circuit with a heater, a temperature controller, a relay and a contact, the temperature controller activating the relay to open the contact.

8. (New) A method of heating wax on a surface of a wax runner and wax on a surface of a pattern gate using a wax tree assembly knife having two opposite sides in preparation for fusing the pattern gate of a wax pattern to the wax runner, wherein the method comprises:

providing an elongated bar of heat conducting material having two opposed and generally parallel heating surfaces, one of the heating surfaces configured for contacting a pattern gate and another of the heating surfaces configured for contacting a wax runner, the heating surface configured for contacting the wax runner having two side edges and a center section between the two side edges, at least a portion of the center section being slightly closer to the heating surface configured for contacting the wax runner than the side edges and configured to provide a space for molten wax to be retained;

heating the elongated bar; and

temporarily positioning the elongated bar between the pattern gate and the wax runner.